

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1905.

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL.

GLOUCESTER v. STROUD.

THE RETURN MATCH.

TWELVE POINTS' WIN FOR THE CITIZENS.

Gloucester appeared at Fromehall Park to-day to fulfil the return engagement with Stroud. Since the last meeting of the rival teams in November (when Gloucester won easily by 31 points to 3) Stroud have performed well, defeating Nuneaton and Stratford in decisive fashion, and drawing with Cinderford and Lydney. Gloucester rested Matthews and G. Vears, and Wood was still absent, but otherwise the City was at full strength. Stroud also selected a strong fifteen, and played eight backs and seven forwards.

GLOUCESTER.	Positions.	STROUD.
G. Romans	Backs.	F. Johnson
C. Smith	Three-quarter	C. Smith
E. Hall	backs.	B. Andrews
J. Harrison	"	T. Cull
A. Hudson	"	H. E. Penny
D. R. Gent	Half-Backs.	R. Brown
J. Stephens	"	W. Cull (capt.)
-	"	C. Harrington
W. Johns (capt.)	Forwards.	F. Westbury
A. Hawker	"	C. A. King
B. Parham	"	Rev. C. V. Lester
F. Pegler	"	E. Wheatley
W. Holder	"	W. Partridge
J. Jewell	"	G. Denley
J. Merchant	"	F. Coniam
H. Collins	"	-

Referee : Mr. F. W. Nicholls (Leicester).

THE GAME.

At ten minutes past two a telegram was received from Dai Williams signifying inability to play, and Stroud called upon B. Andrews, of the Cainscross Club, their reserve. The Stroud Town Band was in attendance, and under the direction of Mr. Tom Richards played selections prior to the match. The ground was in capital condition, and there was a good attendance when the teams fielded on the stroke of 3 o'clock.

Gloucester started, C. Smith returning to touch. The citizens got the ball from the first scrum, and it travelled to Hall, who made a mis-kick into touch. Harrington was busy at the scrum, and he sent to Harrison, who shot to C. Smith. Gent made a mark off that player, but Gloucester reaped no advantage. Stroud heeled to Harrington, and that player forced a minor with a kick.

Following the drop-out Gloucester reached the centre, where they were helped in this respect by mistakes in fielding by Stroud. Shortly the All Whites got away on the right, where C. Smith and Brown were conspicuous in passing. Play had now become very fast and exciting, as first one side and then the other broke away. The tackling was keen, and open movements became almost an impossibility.

Gent tried to dodge through, and nearly succeeded, but he was well collared, and W. Cull returned the ball to the centre. "Whacker" Smith fielded from a free to Stroud, and found touch well inside the home 25. Stroud came away by the aid of Harrington, who kicked to Romans. In danger of being collared Romans threw to Hall, who punted across. C. Smith fielded, and following up well, he upset Hudson in Gloucester's 25. The visitors shot to Jackson, who found touch twice in succession. Then Andrews picked up in the loose, and Smith following up keenly, had all their work to save, Hudson being just in time. Very exciting play followed, and had Stroud's passing been correct Penny must have scored.

Hudson endeavoured to ease the pressure, but he was floored, and the home forwards rushing Gloucester's lines were again in jeopardy. Jewell and Parham headed a fine footwork movement, which carried play to the centre, and here Gent opened up finely, the ball going via Harrison and Hall to "Whacker" Smith, who was forced into touch in the home 25 by Johnson.

Gloucester again opened up, but Brown intercepted, and picking up ran splendidly to the visitors' half. T. Cull was on his left, but Brown did not see him and kicked across for C. Smith to secure. Smith was not in position, and a splendid chance was lost.

Harrison got the ball from Gent, and as the result of passing in which Pegler, Hall, and Hudson shone, Gloucester were nearly in, Stroud stopping the movement just outside. Unfortunately, Hall was injured and was carried off. On resuming, Stroud got off-side, and Gloucester took a shot. It was a bad one, but Harrison picked up and dropped a goal.

Stroud went away finely. Gloucester's defence was spirited, and for a time play raged furiously in their 25. Following a succession of scrums and line-outs, "Whacker" Smith secured and made a fine run to the Stroud half, where he shook off Johnson. He threw inside, but the pass was not taken, and Stroud again invaded the visitors' half, Romans being twice tested.

Receiving from the scrum Harrington kicked to touch, but Gloucester's three-quarters were quickly in possession, and the Stroud defence was tested at the centre mark. W. Cull came to the rescue, and by tricky work at the base of the scrum Gloucester were forced back. Stroud had another free kick, and by its aid they made slight headway.

Play became rather vigorous, and the referee stopped the game for a few moments. On the resumption Stroud were penalised for an infringement in the scrum, Gloucester reaping considerable advantage.

At the centre Harrison made a fine opening and gave to Hudson, who was forced into touch by Johnson. T. Cull eased the pressure, and the interval came.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester 1 goal (d)
Stroud Nil

It transpired during the interval that Hall was suffering from concussion.

Wheatley restarted down the slope for Stroud, "Whacker" Smith returning to touch at the centre. Gloucester gained about a dozen yards by another kick, but the Stroud backs adopting similar tactics got well down. Stephens and Johnson then indulged in a kicking duel, the latter getting the better of the deal. The Citizens fielding in the loose, Harrison found touch at the centre, where Gent tried to break through without success. Harrington was laid out temporarily. Parham was withdrawn from Gloucester's pack to play half, while Stephens went centre three-quarter.

Johnson put in a lovely touch-finder in the corner. Stroud's scrum-worker kicked right into Romans' hands, and the latter made his mark just outside. Johnson replied with a cross-kick, and Brown picking up in the loose, kicked to the left to Penny, who slipped into touch. Stroud kept up the pressure, and Gent had to touch down.

On the drop-out Gloucester resumed, but Stroud attacked, and the visitors' defence was fine. The Citizens broke away now and again, and at last forced Stroud to mid-field, where C. Smith was especially prominent for Stroud. Gent accepted a kick from him, and made a clinking run, when he passed to Hall, who gave to "Whacker" Smith, the movement being stopped inside the Stroud half. The All Whites' three-quarters got possession from their forwards, and Brown kicking prettily there was an exciting race for the ball in Gloucester territory. Smith jumped for it, but Hudson was near and upset him. Stroud stuck to their opponents pluckily, and Gloucester could not make much headway.

Loose footwork by Stroud caused Gloucester considerable anxiety, but the defence was sound. King came into contact with a Citizen, and was laid out, but he was able to resume.

Shortly Penny had absolutely an open field, Cull's pass to him, however, was a bad one. The same player a minute or two later made a grand effort to get round, but "Whacker" Smith was safe.

For a few minutes Stroud had all the play. Suddenly Gloucester turned a defending movement into one of attack, and following some pretty passing Hudson went off but was followed by T. Cull. The visiting three-quarters had another chance and "Whacker" Smith scored in the corner, Romans converting. Gloucester kept up the pressure, and Harrison ran in a fine try, Romans failing.

The visitors continued to attack with energy, Gent in particular doing grand work, and were on the offensive when the whistle sounded no-side.

RESUT :

Gloucester 2 goals (1d)1 try (12 points)
Stroud Nil

REMARKS.

The All Whites by their fine form against Cinderford, Lydney and other clubs, were expect to give Gloucester a good game, and this they certainly did until the last ten minutes, up to which time honours were fairly easy, Stroud, if anything, being a trifle superior.

Stroud adopted the New Zealand formation which has recently been played by them with a large measure of success, but matters hardly worked out so smoothly as usual in this respect on the present occasion. Stroud got the ball all right up to a point, but the halves made a mistake in insisting upon the ball being kept close and kicking to touch. The result of these tactics were that the three-quarters did not obtain the chances they should have had.

Speedy men and tricky they should have played for all they were worth, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Gloucester defence could not have stood repeated assaults. The absence of Williams meant a great deal for Stroud, for Andrews, who is an inexperienced player, but a plucky one, was a bit in the way at half-back where it was originally intended to play Brown. That player operated at inside right.

However, the men worked strenuously, in fact there was strength and spirit in full measure on both sides, and from the point of view of excitement the match was fully enjoyed. The referee unquestionably made a mistake in awarding Gloucester Hudson's dropped goal, as the ball appeared to drop two or three yards outside.

Play was fairly even in the first half, but after the interval Stroud had a great deal the better of the argument, until towards the close, and should have scored at least on two occasions. Their great exertions told on Stroud in the closing stages, and Gloucester's superior stamina brought its reward. Both full-backs played finely, and about on a par. At three-quarter Gloucester were well served by Harrison and Hudson, though "Whacker" Smith was a tower of strength.

Hall was clever as usual. C. Smith, the Stroud right wing, and Cull were perhaps the more prominent of Stroud's four, who were starved for the most part. Harrington and Gent best represented their respective sides at half, the International being really wonderful at times.

Westbury, King, Partridge, and Wheatley were conspicuous forward for Stroud, but all played well; while no one worked harder than Johns, Pegler, Jewell, and Parham on the Gloucester side.

GLOUCESTER A v WEST END.

SECOND TEAMERS TWO POINTS TO THE GOOD.

These teams met at Kingsholm before a small attendance. The Seconds only had a weak team out, some of the regular players declining to turn out against their old side – a policy which should meet with its due reward from the Selection Committee !

In the first five minutes the homesters secured an advantage, and J. Goddard handing out nicely to Cook the latter worked his way through the opposition and made a lovely opening for Hughes to score far out. Hayward converted with a good kick.

After a brief visit to the Gloucester end the West were beaten back again, and Craddock scored an unconverted try.

The West played up better after this, and F. Rust was prominent with some good work in the Gloucester 25. The West tried very hard, but found the defence a bit too good. Meadows "marked," but Hall's kick went wide, and centre play followed.

The Seconds tried passing, but the West were very keen on the ball, and not much headway was made. Earle, on the wing, went away nicely once, but he could not quite get clear. However, Gloucester got a footing in the West Enders' 25, and some pretty passing was shown. The West worked out of danger, and at half-time the game was in the neutral zone.

HALF-TIME SCORE:

Gloucester A	1 goal, 1 try
West End	Nil

Immediately on restarting the west got possession, and Bloxsome, on the wing, put in a fine run, scoring a splendid try in the corner. F. Rust failed in the kick.

The West were playing better in this half, and were having quite as much of the game as Gloucester, the centres particularly showing good form. Eventually, however, Gloucester got going again, and Earle narrowly missed scoring in the corner.

The West forwards carried the game to the centre again, and eventually forced a minor. Shortly after they had another excellent chance, but the final pass was knocked on. Gloucester centred play, but their passing was wild and ineffective. The West touched down from a long kick over the line.

The remaining stages were scrambling and not very interesting, but just before time Hall landed a splendid mark goal.

RESULT :

Gloucester A 1 goal, 1 try (8 points)

West End 1 goal (m), 1 try (6 points)

JC